



*Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks*

**MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS
WILDLIFE DIVISION**

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**Beckman Wildlife Management Area – Roe
Ranch
Habitat/Grazing System Plan
Implementation and Lease**

April 2006

**Beckman Wildlife Management Area – Roe Ranch
Habitat/Grazing System Plan
Implementation and Lease**

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
MEPA, NEPA CHECKLIST**

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. Type of Proposed State Action:

Replace and construct approximately 6.5 miles of boundary fence and 7.5 miles of internal fence; install 1 cattle guard; refurbish existing stock water pipeline (additional water trough); refurbish existing stock water well and water trough; and install 5.0 miles of new stock water pipeline with 3 water troughs on the Beckman WMA. When construction is completed a rest-rotation grazing system on 4,921 acres of the Beckman Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and 2,695 acres of the adjacent Roe Ranch will be implemented (see EXHIBITS A & B).

2. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action:

In accordance with the Montana Environmental Policy Act, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) is required to assess the impacts that any proposal or project might have on the natural and human environments. Further, FWP's land lease-out policy requires an Environmental Assessment (EA) to be written for all new grazing leases, lease extensions or renewals.

3. Name of Project:

Beckman Wildlife Management Area – Roe Ranch Habitat/Grazing System Plan.

4. Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor (if other than the agency):

N/A.

5. If Applicable:

Estimated Construction/Commencement Date: *Summer 2006*

Estimated Completion Date: *Fall 2007*

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

Current Status of Project Design (% complete): 75%

6. Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, range and township):

The proposed project is located on the Beckman WMA and the Roe Ranch, which are 12 miles northeast of Denton, Montana in Fergus County: 4,921 acres in Sections 27, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, T19N, R16E; Sections 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, T18N, R16E; and Sections 1 and 12, T18N, R15E (FWP owned); and 2,695 acres in Sections 1 and 12, T18N, R15E; and Sections 6, 7, 8, 9, 16, 17, 18, T18N, R16E (Roe Ranch owned).

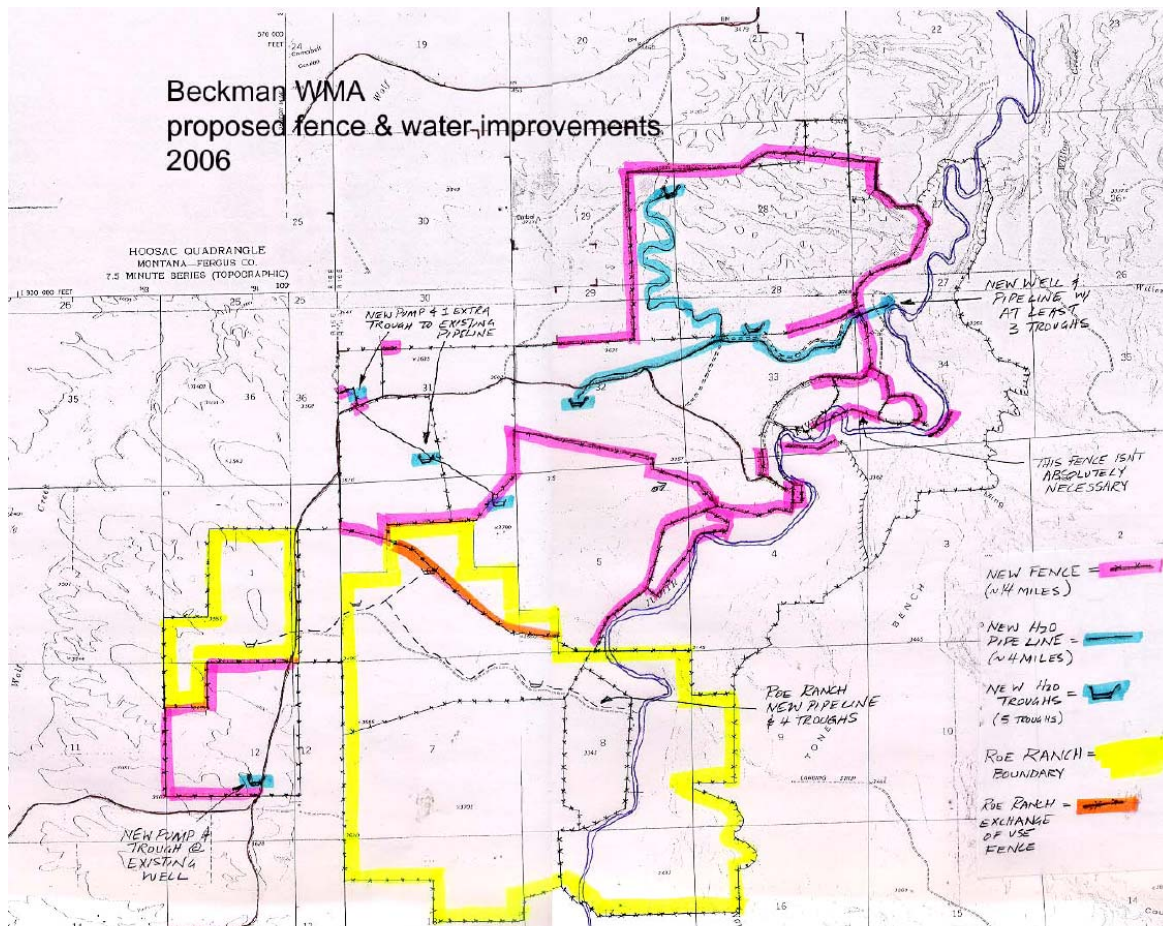
7. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:

Acres		Acres	
(a) Developed:		(d) Floodplain	1,200
Residential.....	0		
Industrial.....	0	(e) Productive:	
		Irrigated cropland (hav)	318
(b) Total Open Space/Woodlands/Recreation	7,616	Drv cropland	0
		Conifer timber.....	690
(c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas	320	Upland range.....	5,088
		Other	0

8. Map/site plan.

Beckman WMA proposed fence and water improvement map on next page.

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9. Listing of any other Local, State or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.

(a) Permits: *None*.

Agency Name	Permit	Date Filed/#
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(b) Funding: *N/A*

Agency Name	Funding Amount
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(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

Agency Name	Type of Responsibility
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- **** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

10. Narrative summary of the proposed action or project including the benefits and purpose of the proposed action:

The attached EXHIBITS A, B & C, explain the purpose and benefits of the proposed habitat grazing system plan, which will be implemented after livestock fences and water improvements are made. A grazing lease utilizing Roe Ranch cattle will be executed at a rate/value of \$6.22 per Animal Unit Month (AUM) when cattle are grazed on the Beckman WMA. The number of AUM's grazed per year will range between 986 AUM's and 1,536 AUM's depending on the year in the grazing sequence/schematic. Yearly lease payment will be in services rendered based on management practices and stipulations in EXHIBITS A & B.

11. List of agencies consulted during preparation of the EA:

*Natural Resources Conservation Service - United States Department of Agriculture
Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation*

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

- * Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- ** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
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- **** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

1. Evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action including secondary and cumulative impacts on the Physical and Human Environment.

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. <u>LAND RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. **Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		X				
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil, which would reduce productivity or fertility?		X				
c. **Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?	X					1d
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

1d. No negative effects are anticipated. Trenching and installing water pipeline for livestock grazing system will temporarily disturb soil that could cause slight erosion until re-vegetated. Cattle grazing on Beckman WMA will cause cattle trails that will slightly increase bare soil and slightly increase chances for soil erosion. However, grazing system will significantly improve vegetative cover on Roe Ranch, which will significantly reduce soil erosion potentials there. This grazing system will increase riparian vegetation, which should reduce potential for soil erosion on floodplain.

	IMPACT *	Can Impact	Comment
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- *** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- **** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

2. AIR						
Will the proposed action result in:	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant	Be Mitigated*	Index
a. **Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (also see 13 (c))		X				
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		X				
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. ***For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge, which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a)		X				
f. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

No impacts are anticipated.

	IMPACT *	Can Impact	Comment
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- *** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- **** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

3. WATER						
Will the proposed action result in:	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant	Be Mitigated*	Index
a. *Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?			X			3a
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?			X			3b
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
l. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c)		X				
m. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a)		X				
n. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

3a and b. Cattle grazing on floodplain, on the banks of the Judith River, and cattle wading into/across the Judith River may increase runoff and turbidity in river. Low stocking rates and only grazing 1/3rd of floodplain for short period each spring will result in minimal impacts. Improvement of range condition and residual cover in uplands will significantly reduce runoff from uplands, which will improve water quality during summer and fall periods.

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- *** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- **** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

4. <u>VEGETATION</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?				X		Index 4a
b. Alteration of a plant community?			X			4b
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?	X					
f. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		X				
g. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

4a & 4b. This grazing system should increase cottonwood and willow plant communities, significantly so on the Roe Ranch. This system should also improve range condition and residual vegetative cover in the uplands, significantly so on the Roe Ranch, which will increase the diversity and productivity of native plant communities on the entire project area for the benefit of wildlife.

- * Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- ** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- *** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- **** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

** 5. FISH/WILDLIFE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?				X		5b
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?				X		5c
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?		X				
h. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f)		X				
i. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d)		X				
j. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

5b & 5c. Increased occurrence and condition of cottonwood and willow (and other riparian) plant communities will increase habitat available for white-tailed deer, pheasants, Merriam's turkeys and non-game animal and bird species. Improved condition of woody plant species occurring in the woody draws will positively affect mule deer and the above-mentioned animal and bird species. Improved condition and amounts of residual cover in the upland grasslands will also positively affect sharp-tailed grouse, Hungarian partridge, and the above-mentioned animal and bird species. For the same reasons, numerous non-game wildlife species will also be benefited by these changes in the existing vegetation.

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B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. <u>NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?		X				
b. Exposure of people to serve or nuisance noise levels?		X				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

No impacts are anticipated.

7. <u>LAND USE</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				
b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?			X		X	7d
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

7d. Use of the Roe Ranch by hunters walking in from the Beckman WMA will probably result in an increase in hunter days and some additional conflicts with the one residence (home) that's located on the Roe Ranch. To mitigate this a no shooting zone can be posted around this one residence to ensure safety of residence occupants and to minimize disturbances caused by walk-in hunters.

8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?		X				
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				
d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

No impacts are anticipated.

	IMPACT *	Can	
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9. COMMUNITY IMPACT						
Will the proposed action result in:	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant	Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?			X			9c
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?			X			9e
f. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

9c. The Beckman Wildlife Management Area (WMA) provides a considerable amount (probably at least 500 hunter days) of free public recreation each year. Implementation of this habitat/grazing plan will likely increase public use of the Beckman WMA and the adjacent Roe Ranch. Some of these users of the Beckman WMA will purchase food, gasoline, and other services in the nearby communities of Denton and Lewistown, Montana, which results in minor increases in employment and personal income in these communities and surrounding area.

9e. Public use of the Beckman WMA, and the Balley Dome (county) Road, has increased since the inception of the Beckman WMA in 1999. Implementing this habitat/grazing system will likely result in increased public use of the Beckman WMA and the Roe Ranch, though the use is seasonal and the increase is expected to be minor. Heavier use of, and impacts to, the Balley Dome Road are also expected to be seasonal and minor.

	IMPACT *	Can Impact	
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10. PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES						
Will the proposed action result in:	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant	Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify:		X				
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?			X			10c
d. Will the proposed action result in increased use of any energy source?			X			10d
e. **Define projected revenue sources						10e
f. **Define projected maintenance costs.						10f
g. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

10c & 10d. Refurbishing and again using 2 existing wells and development of a new well and livestock water pipeline are necessary for implementing this grazing system, which will require utilizing slightly more electricity for pumping water than has occurred in the past 5 years. This increased amount of electricity is currently available in the electrical service already provided to the property by Fergus Electric Cooperative.

10e & 10f. Funding to develop the proposed water pipelines and pasture and boundary fences on the Beckman WMA will come from MFWP Statewide Operations and Maintenance Dollars for Wildlife Lands. Funding to develop and implement the proposed water pipeline and pasture fences on the Roe Ranch come from the Roe Ranch and from USDA EQUIP. Funding for maintenance of the proposed pipelines and boundary fences will be provided by the Roe Ranch and by FWP R4 Wildlife Management Areas operations budget.

	IMPACT *	Can	
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** 11. AESTHETICS/RECREATION						
Will the proposed action result in:	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant	Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		X				
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. **Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report)			X			11c
d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c)		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

11c. The proposed action will enhance wildlife viewing and hunting opportunities for the public.

12. CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES	IMPACT *	Can Impact	
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Will the proposed action result in:	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant	Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
a. **Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?		X				
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. **** <u>For P-R/D-J</u> , will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12.a)		No				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

No impacts are anticipated.

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:						
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources that create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
f. ***For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e)		No				
g. ****For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.		None				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

No impacts are anticipated.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW, CONTINUED

2. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:

Alternative 1. Establishment and maintenance of the proposed habitat grazing system plan will increase cottonwood/willow stands, woody vegetation in the woody draws, and residual grassland vegetation in the uplands, significantly so on the Roe Ranch. This will result in improved year-round wildlife habitat for a variety of game and non-game wildlife species, particularly mule and white-tailed deer, Merriam's turkeys, pheasants, sharp-tailed grouse, Hungarian partridge, and beaver.

Alternative 2. (No Action Alternative) Under this alternative the improvement and enhancement of the above mentioned vegetation would not be occur and benefits associated with the Proposed Action would not be realized. This alternative would have no impact to the existing physical or human environment.

3. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:

NA

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

Discussions of specific items in the EA checklist are located at the end of their respective sections.

PART IV. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required (YES/NO)? If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action.

An EIS is not required. The EA checklist is an appropriate level of analysis because most of the effects caused by the proposed action would be beneficial and any negative impacts are minor and can be mitigated as previously discussed.

2. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?

This EA will be made available to any interested parties or groups through the Region 4 Headquarters in Great Falls, Montana; the Lewistown Area Office in Lewistown, Montana; and the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks website at <http://fwp.mt.gov/publicnotices>

The USDA NRCS personnel administering programs in this area have been contacted and have had the opportunity to review this project. No negative impacts or concerns were expressed.

Various sportspeople, landowners, and stockmen have learned of this proposed habitat grazing system plan from information disseminated by FWP Lewistown area wildlife biologist. No negative impacts or concerns were expressed.

3. Duration of comment period.

The duration of the comment period will be 30 days: April 18th through May 17th, 2006. Comments may be emailed to tstivers@mt.gov, or written comments may also be sent to the following address:

*Thomas S. Stivers
Wildlife Biologist
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
P.O. Box 938
Lewistown, MT 59457
(406) 538-4658 ext 228*

4. Name, title, address and phone number of the person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:

*Thomas S. Stivers
Wildlife Biologist
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
P.O. Box 938
Lewistown, MT 59457
(406) 538-4658 ext 228*

EXHIBIT A:
BECKMAN WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA – ROE RANCH

HABITAT/GRAZING SYSTEM PLAN

INTRODUCTION:

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) considers Wildlife Management Areas (WMA's) as assets obtained to benefit vegetation, wildlife and the public. Secondly, WMA's are assets to influence the management of additional wildlife habitat to benefit vegetation, wildlife and the public. This is the reason for this habitat grazing system plan incorporating the adjacent private land, the Roe Ranch. This plan will help the Roe Ranch meet its goals while allowing FWP to expand the influence of habitat management on the Beckman WMA.

GOALS:

1. Improve cottonwood/willow regeneration on the Judith River river-bottom in regards to cattle grazing. Monitor cottonwood/willow regeneration using standard techniques (Harrington, 2005).
2. Improve the condition of woody shrub vegetation in woody draws. Monitor the condition of woody draws by using browse evaluation technique (Keigley and Frisina, 1998).
3. Improve the condition of grassland vegetation. Monitor the condition of grassland vegetation using standard techniques (Harrington, 2005).
4. Improve grass residual cover.

GRAZING ROTATION:

The following pastures (Figure 1) and grazing rotation schedule (Table 1) incorporates 4,921 acres of the Beckman Wildlife Management Area with the neighboring Roe Ranch (2,695 acres) to enhance wildlife habitat on a total of 7,616 acres while providing year-round grazing and pasture for up to 200 cows with calves-at-side and 12 bulls.

Beginning on April 1 each year cows with newborn calves can be moved into 1 of 3 River (Spring) Pastures and allowed to remain there until the end of May. The other 2 River (Spring) Pastures will not be grazed that (each) year (Table 1).

On June 1 cows with calves will be moved into the Summer Pasture that was not grazed (rested) the year before and remain there until the end of July. On ~ August 1 (seed ripe), cows with calves will be moved into the second Summer Pasture, which was grazed during June and July the year before, and remain there until the end of September. The third Summer Pasture will not be grazed that year (receive a full year of rest) (Table1).

To facilitate herd management, bulls can be pulled from the cows when moving from the first to the second Summer Pasture on ~ August 1 (seed ripe). The bulls (12 or less) can be left in the first grazed Summer Pasture (June 1 – July 31) until August 31, and

then allowed to follow the cattle through the grazing system pasture rotations. After ~ August 1 (seed ripe) bulls may also be placed in the Winter Pasture that is scheduled for grazing by cows later that year.

On October 1, or 1 week earlier if necessary, cows with calves will be moved into the Fall Pasture that was not grazed the year before. Cows can remain in the Fall Pasture until October 20. The other Fall Pasture will not be grazed that year (receive a full year of rest) (Table1).

On October 21, or 1 week earlier if necessary, cows will be moved into the Early Winter Pasture that was not grazed the year before. Cows will remain in the Early Winter Pasture until the end of November. The other Early Winter Pasture will not be grazed that year (receive a full year of rest) (Table 1.).

On December 1, or no sooner than the Monday following Thanksgiving Day, cows will be moved into the Winter Pasture that was not grazed the year before. Cows will remain in the Winter Pasture through at least the end of March. Cows, or cows with calves, can only be fed hay when in the Winter Pasture. Cows that have not calved by the end of March can remain in the Winter Pasture until they have calved. The other Winter Pasture will not be grazed that year (receive a full year of rest) (Table 1.).

On April 1, cows with calves can again start being turned out into the next River (Spring) Pasture that is scheduled for grazing, which was not grazed the year before.

Table 1. Beckman WMA – Roe Ranch Grazing Rotation Formula.

	River (Spring) Pastures			Summer Pastures			Fall Pastures		Early Winter Pastures		Winter Pastures	
Year	R1	R2	R3	S1	S2	S3	F1	F2	EW1	EW2	W1	W2
2007	E	R	R	R	A	B	F	R	EW	R	W	R
2008	R	E	R	A	B	R	R	F	R	EW	R	W
2009	R	R	E	B	R	A	F	R	EW	R	W	R
2010	E	R	R	R	A	B	R	F	R	EW	R	W
2011	R	E	R	A	B	R	F	R	EW	R	W	R
2012	R	R	E	B	R	A	R	F	R	EW	R	W
2013	E	R	R	R	A	B	F	R	EW	R	W	R
2014	R	E	R	A	B	R	R	F	R	EW	R	W

R = Yearlong rest from livestock grazing.

E = Spring livestock grazing April 1 – May 31.


A = Early summer livestock grazing, June 1 – July 31.

B = Late summer livestock grazing, ~ Aug. 1 – Sept. 30 (after seed ripe).

F = Fall livestock grazing, Oct. 1 – Oct. 20.

EW = Early winter livestock grazing, Oct. 21 – Nov. 30.

W = Winter livestock grazing, Dec. 1 – March 31.

 = Roe Ranch deeded lands.

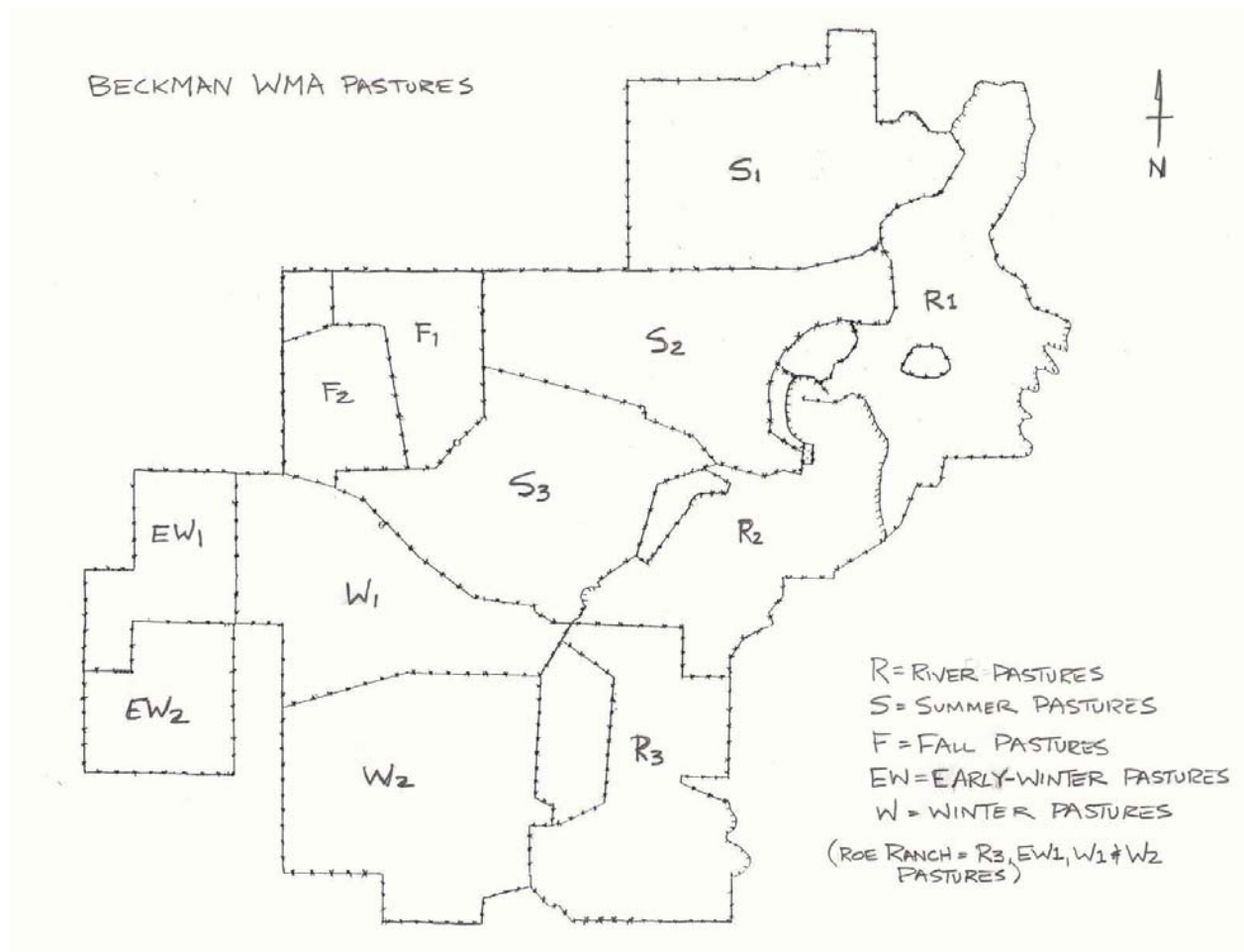


Figure 1. Pastures of the Beckman WMA -- Roe Ranch Habitat/Grazing System Plan.

Harrington, B. 2005. Vegetation Monitoring Manual. Fed. Aid in Wildl. Rest. Proj. W-54-R. Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, Helena. 21 pp.

Keigley, R. B. and M. R. Frisina. 1998. Browse Evaluation By Analysis Of Growth Form. First Edition 1998 Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks. Helena. 153 pp.

EXHIBIT B:

Beckman Wildlife Management Area – Roe Ranch
Habitat/Grazing System Plan
STIPULATIONS

Cattle (maximum of 200 cows with calves and 12 bulls) and horses (maximum of 6) are the only classes of livestock that will be used in this grazing system. The Roe Ranch horses can also be kept in their corrals, calving paddock, hay meadows, or heifer pasture.

The Roe Ranch will be responsible for moving cattle between pastures as described by the grazing rotation formula in Table 1, EXHIBIT A.

During the time that individual pastures are scheduled for rest, the Roe Ranch will be responsible for keeping livestock out of rested pastures.

Cattle may be moved across rested pastures when moving cattle during scheduled pasture rotations. Such cattle movements will be made in as timely a manner as possible.

The Roe Ranch River Pasture (R3) has less grazing capacity than the other 2 River Pastures (R1 and R2). To increase the capacity of R3, when R3 is grazed cattle will have unrestricted access to the hay meadows that are located in R3 on the east side of the Judith River.

Moving cattle from the 1st to the 2nd summer pasture each year will occur about August 1, or possibly earlier if the majority of seed produced by blue bunch and western wheatgrass have reached seed ripe stage, as determined by FWP R4 Lewistown area wildlife biologist.

When moving cattle from the 1st to the 2nd summer pasture, the bulls (12 or less) can be pulled from the cows and left in the 1st grazed summer pasture until August 31, and then allowed to follow the cattle through the grazing system pasture rotations. After ~ August 1 (seed ripe) bulls may also be placed in the winter pasture that is scheduled for grazing by cows later that year/season.

Hay will not be fed on the Beckman WMA except under unusual circumstances (e.g. severe snow storms) with approval from the R4 Wildlife Program Manager.

Weaned replacement heifers will be run on the Roe Ranch hay meadows on the west side of the Judith River or in a pasture that is proposed specifically for this purpose, which the Roe Ranch will construct within what is now Winter Pasture W2 (the larger and more southern of the 2 winter pastures).

Weaned replacement heifers will not be run on the Beckman WMA or Roe Ranch from June through October each year.

Bred replacement heifers may be wintered on the Roe Ranch. These bred heifers will

be run on the Roe Ranch hay meadows on the west side of the Judith River or on the Winter Pasture with their older cows.

The Roe Ranch will construct a new corral in the vicinity of the proposed heifer pasture, in the coulee south of the calving shed and calving lot, which also is within what is now Winter Pasture W2. The existing corral and associated sheds that are located on the Judith River bottom, that the new corral will replace, will be removed and reclaimed and become part of River Pasture R3, further increasing it's capacity.

The Roe Ranch will cease harvesting hay, every year, in their Early Winter Pasture EW1 so that forage is available for livestock and/or wildlife use.

The Roe Ranch will provide materials and labor and construct a pipeline (complying with NRCS design specifications) on their property that will provide livestock water to the uplands in pastures W1, EW1, S3 and EW2.

The Roe Ranch will provide materials and labor and construct ~1 mile of fence (meeting NRCS design specifications) that will separate pastures W1 from S3.

The Roe Ranch agrees to an exchange of use of 155 acres of FWP (Beckman WMA) land in Pasture W1, for 160 acres of Roe Ranch land in Pasture S3. This exchange of use will result in a fence location (referenced above) that will minimize fencing costs and maintenance while improving forage availability/utilization in pastures W1 and S3.

The Roe Ranch is responsible for the routine maintenance of fences and water systems, including boundary fences, to prevent livestock from trespassing onto the WMA.

The Roe Ranch will be responsible for the removal of all trespass livestock on FWP owned lands included within this grazing system.

FWP will be responsible for providing materials required for maintaining fences and water systems on FWP owned lands included within this grazing system.

FWP will be responsible for major construction of new fence and new water system on FWP owned lands included within this grazing system.

The Roe Ranch agrees to continue to allow free public hunting (no outfitting and no fees charged for hunting) on their ranch during the period that the Beckman WMA – Roe Ranch grazing system is in effect. In this case, and more specifically, the Roe Ranch agrees to allow unlimited walk-in access/hunting (asking for permission is not required) during all legally defined hunting seasons, as long as hunters enter the Roe Ranch, on foot, directly from the Beckman WMA or, on foot, directly from the Bally Dome county road, so long as the Roe Ranch has the right to evict individual hunters who do not walk in and/or comply with Montana laws. In other words, hunters may hunt the Roe Ranch in the exact same way as they hunt the Beckman WMA -- they must park their vehicle

and hunt on foot and pack their game out on foot.

If at a later date FWP determines that the Beckman WMA – Roe Ranch habitat/grazing system is under stocked using 200 cow/calf pairs and 12 bulls, an increase in the stocking rate may be warranted. If the stocking rate for this habitat/grazing system is increased, the Roe Ranch will pay FWP a predetermined FWP-rate for any and all AUM's greater than the original AUM's described in this document, which are consumed each year on the Beckman WMA.

EXHIBIT C:
Beckman Wildlife Management Area – Roe Ranch
Habitat/Grazing System Plan
JUSTIFICATION

- The Roe Ranch lies immediately south of the Beckman WMA and comprises a sizable, important portion of the overall habitat complex that's used by much of the wildlife that inhabit the Beckman WMA. The Roe Ranch, by necessity, has had a history of high (cattle) stocking rates, as did the property that is now the Beckman WMA, which has had a negative impact on some of the native plant communities. This proposal is to implement a coordinated rest-rotation grazing system that would enhance wildlife habitat on both the Beckman WMA and Roe Ranch for public benefit.
- This proposed grazing system would improve habitat quality and quantity for a variety of wildlife species, particularly mule and white-tailed deer, sharp-tailed grouse, Merriam's turkeys, and ring-necked pheasants.
- Wildlife habitat will be improved/enhanced by resting, deferring and rotating cattle grazing on certain key pastures at precise times, and by stocking the grazed pastures at levels that will insure that the condition of the upland and riparian plant communities are significantly improved. To facilitate these habitat improvements the Beckman WMA/Roe Ranch grazing system will incorporate approximately ½ of the animal unit months (AUMs) of cattle grazing that historical occurred on the same area of land. To expedite the recovery of the plant communities in poorest condition, those areas will no longer receive season long or growing season use by livestock. Instead, those areas will be grazed during winter, every other year, or during early spring every third year.
- This grazing system will reduce overall cattle grazing on 7 miles of riparian vegetation along the Judith River and Warm Spring Creek (approximately 1200 acres of river/creek bottom vegetation), which will greatly increase the quantity and quality of cottonwood and willow dominated plant communities, which will directly benefit white-tailed deer, mule deer, Hungarian partridge, ring-necked pheasants, Merriam's turkeys, mourning doves, and numerous non-game wildlife species.
- This grazing system will also, significantly, improve range condition, residual cover, and vegetative re-growth in the uplands, which will be a direct benefit to mule deer, white-tailed deer, sharp-tailed grouse and Merriam's turkeys.
- This grazing system is also designed so conflicts between hunters and cattle (and cattle management) will be minimal, at most. For instance, during the spring turkey season most turkeys and turkey hunting will occur in the 3 Summer and 2 Winter Pastures that are located immediately uphill from the 3 River Pastures (of which 2 will not be grazed each year). During the summer months, when the public prefers to utilize the river and river bottom, cattle will be in the uplands and not on the river. In the fall, archery hunters will either be on the river bottom, or in the conifer timber in the uplands. At that time cattle will not be in the river bottom, and only in 1 of 3 Summer Pastures or 1 of 2 Fall Pastures, and not in either of the 2 Winter Pastures. Most upland bird hunting will occur on the river bottom or in the grasslands in the uplands. Cattle will not be on the river or in the 2 Winter Pastures, and only in 1 of 2 Fall Pastures or 1 of 2 Early Winter Pastures during the major portion of the bird season. And during the 5-week rifle season cattle will not be on the river bottom or in the conifer timber in the uplands where most rifle hunting will occur.
- The Roe Ranch also agrees to allow free, unlimited walk-in public hunting on their ranch similar to how the public hunting occurs on the Beckman WMA.
- The Roe Ranch also agrees to perform the following ranch management operations

necessary for actualizing the Beckman WMA – Roe Ranch habitat/grazing plan:

- The Roe Ranch agrees to enter into this grazing system without increasing cattle numbers from what they currently run on their ranch, except by mutual agreement.
- The Roe Ranch agrees to change the growing season long grazing practices that have occurred on their ranch to primarily winter/early spring use.
- The Roe Ranch agrees to graze their hay fields (1st cutting) on the east side of the river in River Pasture R3, on the years that pasture R3 is scheduled for use.
- The Roe Ranch agrees to cease harvesting hay, every year, in their Early Winter Pasture EW1 so that forage is available for livestock and/or wildlife use.
- The Roe Ranch agrees to move their heifer pasture and corral off of the river bottom to the uplands, to reduce impacts to water quality and riparian vegetation.
- The Roe Ranch agrees to provide materials and labor and to construct a pipeline (complying with NRCS design specifications) on their property that will provide livestock water to the uplands in pastures W1, EW1, S3 and EW2.
- The Roe Ranch agrees to provide materials and labor and to construct 1 mile of fence (meeting NRCS design specifications) that will separate pastures W1 from S3.
- The Roe Ranch agrees to an exchange of use of 155 acres of FWP (Beckman WMA) land in Pasture W1, for 160 acres of Roe Ranch land in Pasture S3. This exchange of use will result in a fence location (referenced above) that will minimize fencing costs and maintenance while improving forage availability/utilization in pastures W1 and S3.
- The Roe Ranch agrees to maintain all livestock watering systems (on the Beckman WMA and Roe Ranch) and to pay the costs of operating said water systems (all electrical costs and routine maintenance).
- The Roe Ranch agrees to maintain all of the fences and to prevent and take care of trespass livestock problems as they arise.